

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 DHA-05 /065 W

-----008363 080701Z /20

P R 080550Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6254

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7579

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, KS

SUBJ: ROKG ARRESTS POET FOR EM-9 VIOLATION

1. YANG SONG-U WAS ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH VIOLATION OF EM-9 IN THE WAKE OF PUBLICATION OF HIS POEM "DIARY OF A SLAVE" IN THE JUNE ISSUE OF THE JAPANESE MAGAZINE SEKAI.

2. EMBOFF RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND FROM A PERSONAL FRIEND OF YANG. YANG WAS A SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER WITH RECOGNIZED LITERARY TALENT AND AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS. IN 1975 HE WROTE A POEM ENTITLED "WINTER REPUBLIC" WHICH CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE AUTHORITIES WHO FORCED HIM OUT OF HIS TEACHING POSITION. YANG WITHDREW TO A MONASTERY TO WRITE AND MEDITATE. HE WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE KNCC TO POLISH A NEW TEXT OF THE BIBLE WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED BY A COMMISSION OF SCHOLARS. HE FINISHED THIS JOB ABOUT A YEAR AGO.

3. A JAPANESE FRIEND SAW THE MANUSCRIPT OF "DIARY OF A SLAVE" AND GAVE IT TO SEKAI WITHOUT YANG'S PERMISSION. AT FIRST YANG REFUSED TO PERMIT PUBLICATION OF HIS WORK SINCE HE WAS SURE IT WOULD LAND HIM IN JAIL AND HE THOUGHT HE COULD DO MORE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WHILE AT  
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LIBERTY. HOWEVER, HE FINALLY DECIDED THAT HE WAS EVADING HIS PUBLIC DUTY AND GRANTED SEKAI PERMISSION TO PRINT HIS WORK.

4. BY STRANGE COINCIDENCE, YANG'S ARREST COINCIDES WITH THE PUBLICATION IN KOREA OF HIS FIRST MAJOR SET OF WORKS. THE BOOK BEARS THE TITLE "WINTER REPUBLIC"

AND FEATURES THAT POEM. THE FIRST PRINTING IS ON SALE  
AND AUTHORITIES HAVE POSED NO OBJECTIONS AS YET. AP-  
PRENTLY AUTHORITIES NO LONGER CONSIDER THIS WORK AS  
OBJECTIONABLE AS THEY DID TWO YEARS AGO.  
SNEIDER

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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